

GEN.

*Ans Nov. 9
will forward on
Dr. Scheuch's info later*

1102 E. Capitol St., NE
Washington, D.C. 20002
October 27, 1967

Dear Mrs. Clark,

I am a graduate student at Princeton University pursuing my doctorate in American history. At present I am working on the dissertation at the National Archives. The topic is "Federal Administration of Utah Territory, 1879-1896." I am studying in particular the campaign undertaken by the national government to rid Utah of the assumed evils of polygamy and the Mormon Church's temporal power. The campaign led to Congress' passing two major pieces of anti-Mormon legislation in the 1880s - legislation whose implementation led to the arrest and conviction of 1300 polygamists, the disfranchisement of one-quarter of the Mormon population, and, finally, the temporary confiscation of millions of dollars worth of church property.

One of the most important agencies created by Congress to administer federal policy in Utah was the Utah Commission. It was provided for in the Edmunds Act of 1882. Its duty was the supervision of the entire electoral machinery in the territory; through such control it was to implement a "test oath" prohibiting polygamists from either voting or holding office.

Ambrose B. Carlton of Indiana was appointed to this five-man commission when it was first set up. He served from 1882 to 1889, becoming chairman of the commission under the Cleveland administration.

Carlton was a highly educated attorney who had served at least one term in the state legisla-

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

ture. At that time he represented Vigo County, and his permanent residence throughout the 1880s seems to have been Terre Haute. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate any other information on Carlton, and thus turn to your historical society in the hopes that you may know of materials concerning him, or at least that you may be able to refer me to someone who does. I should note that I am not interested in writing any kind of biography of Carlton. My concern is with his career as a member of the Utah Commission and his attitudes towards the Mormon question. I have hopes that his attitudes (and perhaps actions) might be revealed through personal correspondence with friends or through private materials left with some local or state historical institution.

One further fact comes to mind - Carlton in the late 1880s wrote a book entitled Wonderlands of the Wild West, primarily a travel book of the areas he visited in Utah.

Thank you very much for your time and efforts.

Sincerely yours,


Henry J. Wolfinger.

Bradsby's HISTORY OF VIGO COUNTY, IND.-1891

- p.324 - "Judge Ambrose B. Carlton, by an appointment from the governor, held the Sept. term (of court) 1856."
- p.327 - "...appointed until next Oct. election..."
- p.334 - "...after death of Col. W. K. Edwards, Sept. 25, 1878... (this reference deals with Carlton's participation in funeral, etc.)"
- p.406 - "1876... Democratic county convention endorsed A. B. Carlton for judge of supreme court..." (he won)
- p.408 - "1878... Judge Carlton was chairman of Democratic convention described as most turbulent judicial convention probably ever assembled in circuit..."
- p.410 - "1876-1878, A. B. Carlton, Democrat, was State Representative."
- p.541 - "burning down of State Normal Institute (now Indiana State University here in Terre Haute) on April 10, 1888... Carlton served on that college board..."
- p.818 - law firm of Voorhees & Carlton was mentioned in 1874 (this was Daniel W. Voorhees, Tall Sycamore of the Wabash, a most important local, state and national figure, Senator from Indiana, and largely responsible for the Library of Congress, etc... undoubtedly a great influence on Carlton.)